



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

NOVEMBER 23, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Dan Bartman	Designated Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Luisa Oliveira	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>	

The meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Co-Chair, Luisa Oliveira at 6:05pm and adjourned at 7:07pm. As authorized by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, Co-Chair and Director of Planning & Zoning Sarah Lewis designated Senior Planner Daniel Bartman to serve as Co-Chair in her place for this meeting.

DESIGN REVIEW: 371 Highland Avenue

(Continued from October 27, 2020)

William Chalfant, Project Manager from Khalsa Design Inc., presented a landscape plan for the site and a revision of design option #3 with a simplified palette of materials, including an option #3b using the same materials for the right side just in different colors. The design of both versions also wraps entirely around the building, so that the building appears to be two attached buildings from both the front and the back. Prior options presented had included a third materials treatment for the rear of the building.

Member Arbaugh commented that existing street trees should be preserved to every extent practicable and discussed the width of the sidewalk and the intended design for the furnishing area of the sidewalk with Mr. Chalfant. Member Fennick reviewed the two renditions of the revised Option #3 and recommended that the band dividing the appearance of left side façade should be deep and narrow to create a strong shadow. For the right-side façade, Member Fennick commented that the addition of a garage door was an overall improvement and recommended that the cornice have more uniformity across the building, that the architectural bay corresponding to the lobby entrance be framed to better identify the entrance, and the overall tectonics of the design be improved so that materials do not appear to be stuck on to the building. Members Arbaugh and Fennick discussed the location of the fitness and bike rooms with the applicant and suggested the Applicant explore adding a door to the rear of the building so that residents could enter the bike room from the back while the fitness room had a presence on the street. Member Valdes recommended against the second version of Option 3 that uses white brick for the right side and that the band dividing the appearance of left side façade should be brick rather than introducing an additional metal material. Members Arbaugh and Valdes recommended revision of the center architectural bay over the lobby entrance. Member Arbaugh suggested simplifying the right-side façade. Member Fennick agreed.

Following a motion by Member Valdez seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) that all of the applicable design guidelines were satisfied. However, the Commission also asked the Mr. Chalfant to incorporate the Commission's feedback into another revision and voted unanimously (3-0) to continue the meeting to the next regularly scheduled meeting date prior to providing any final redocumentations.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

DESIGN REVIEW: 494 Medford Street

(Continued from October 27, 2020)

James Rissling, LR Designs, presented a General Building in the MR4 district. The Commission discussed landscaping, sidewalk width, and building façade.

Member Arbaugh noticed that the site plan shows 10.5 foot sidewalks, instead of the 12 foot sidewalks required in the Zoning Ordinance. Designated-Chair Bartman confirmed that the applicant can apply for a variance for a shorter setback. Member Arbaugh also noted that the tree pits are smaller than required. He also questioned the effectiveness of the planters on the Trull Street and the North side of the building, considering the amount of light they would receive. The Commission touched upon the amount of pavement that is being proposed. It was recommended that the applicant use permeable or grass pavers and to leave some room at the property line. Mr. Rissling compared the previous version of the proposal to the new proposal. Member Fennick noted that the planter base in the front, grounds the building. Member Arbaugh agreed and made a note that he would like to see it big enough to actually use as a planter. The Commission agreed that the proposal had moved along in the right direction.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend the proposed design.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED
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NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.